



# Public Service Commission of Wisconsin

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## **PSC Adopts Wireless 911 Rules to Improve Public Safety**

MADISON – The Public Service Commission of Wisconsin (PSC) unanimously approved administrative rules to help implement wireless 911 service and improve public safety in Wisconsin.

In August, Governor Jim Doyle signed ACT 48, creating a three year grant program administered by the PSC to reimburse local governments and wireless telephone providers for costs related to providing wireless 911 service to help pinpoint the location of emergency calls from wireless telephones. ACT 48 will allow police and fire to respond within minutes to a wireless call about an emergency. Whether it is an accident victim calling from a deserted highway, a motorist reporting a drunk driver, or a victim reporting a crime, wireless 911 will provide a measure of security for all wireless users.

The PSC administrative rules will help communities cover their costs to implement wireless 911 and respond more effectively to emergency calls from wireless callers. Funding concerns had left many communities in a holding pattern to provide the service. Only Waukesha County has an active enhanced wireless 911 system in place. The Commission decision now provides a road map for communities and wireless providers to secure funding for the enhanced wireless 911 and should encourage communities to move forward in providing this vital public safety service.

Enhanced wireless 911 allows public safety answering points (PSAPs) to automatically determine the location and telephone number of the caller, even if the caller is unable to communicate that information.

In the rule, the Commission determined the costs eligible for reimbursement to local governments and wireless providers for enhanced 911 equipment. After all applications are reviewed, a fee will be established to cover statewide enhanced 911 and a uniform statewide surcharge will be added to the bill of all wireless phone users. The fee is slated to sunset in three years. The amount of the surcharge will not be known until all costs are in and evaluated. Forty states have enacted similar laws and the median surcharge among those states is 58 cents per month.

The PSC expects to start reviewing applications from counties for reimbursement of their enhanced 911 costs early next year.

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